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Viewing cable 09RPODUBAI58, IRAN REGIONAL PRESENCE OFFICE - WINDOW ON IRAN - JANUARY 27,

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#09RPODUBAI58**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
09RPODUBAI58	2009-02-08 05:38	2011-08-30 01:44	SECRET//NOFORN	Iran RPO Dubai

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2011/04/17/112290/state-department-cables-reveal.html>

VZCZCXR0568
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHKUK
DE RUEHDIR #0058/01 0390538
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
P R 080538Z FEB 09
FM RPO DUBAI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0340
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RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA 0001
RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC
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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEHDIR/RPO DUBAI 0338

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 RPO DUBAI 000058

NOFORN
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2/8/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [IR](#)
SUBJECT: IRAN REGIONAL PRESENCE OFFICE - WINDOW ON IRAN - JANUARY 27,
2009

DUBAI 00000058 001.2 OF 003

CLASSIFIED BY: Ramin Asgard, Director, Iran Regional Presence Office - Dubai, DOS.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

[¶1.](#) [U] This January 27, 2009 edition of Window on Iran was sent out on that date via classified e-mail.

[¶2.](#) [S/NF] More on Russia-Iran Security Ties: In a follow up discussion with a former IRGC general regarding Russian security cooperation with Iran, he explained that Russia saw Iran as a "joint-venture" partner in extending its influence into the Middle East. He noted that Iran's position was more advanced than simply that of an arms purchaser, however, citing the Russian acquiescence to an Iranian demand to provide a T-72 tank factory in the late 90s (while he was still in the IRGC). For their part, the Russians wished to tie Iranian military procurement into Russian systems, making any move away difficult and increasing Russian influence on Iran. IRPO officer asked specifically whether the S-300 system deliveries had gone forward. The general replied that by now they were likely to have been delivered quietly, either through any number of ships at a Caspian port or on a Russian heavy transport aircraft with Ukrainian cooperation. Russian-Iran security cooperation, he added, is not directly aimed at the US, but as Russia sees close ties with Iran as a means to project influence and gain access to warm water port facilities, they have strong incentives to prevent the US from improving its ties with Iran and probably displacing its influence. For these reasons, he concluded, Russia continues to provide Iran a range of diplomatic and security favors - the S-300 and the Bushehr reactor being the most salient examples - to keep this important security relationship intact.

[¶3.](#) [S/NF] Supreme Leader's South Africa Connection?: According to XXXXXXXXXXXX the Taleghani family (Ayatollah Mahmoud Taleghani was a key figure in Islamic opposition to the Shah), Supreme Leader Khamenei's sons Mojtaba and Mostafa have invested heavily (estimated in tens of billions USD) over the past year in various development projects in South Africa. This point shed light on another well-placed IRPO contact's repeated references

a few weeks ago to former South African President Nelson Mandela's possible role as a credible US-Iran intermediary. Comment: While our primary source suggested investment was in "heavy industry," IRPO has no further information on the type and amount of investment. As noted earlier in WOI (01/13/09), Mojtaba Khamenei is a principal gatekeeper to the Supreme Leader and was recently appointed as the Supreme Leaders Office point person on US-Iran relations.

¶4. [S/NF] A Different Khatami?: Later in the same discussion, as the topic turned to the upcoming presidential election, XXXXXXXXXXXX cautioned against mistaking today's Khatami with the Khatami of 1992 (when he resigned as Minister of Culture) or 1999 (first term as President starts) or 2005 (second term concludes). He recounted a recent meeting with Khatami, where Khatami said that despite perceptions to the contrary, he struggled strenuously to support civil society and democratic freedoms inside Iran, but was unable to overcome the resistance of the Supreme Leader. "Every time I left a meeting with Khamenei, I was soaked in sweat," Khatami reportedly said. Now, this source continued, Khatami was a "determined democrat." In fact, he added softly after scanning the vicinity to see who might be listening, "he no longer supports the principle of velayat-e faqih."

¶5. [S/NF] Pourmohammadi Considering a Run - Rafsanjani's Chips Across the Board: Former Interior Minister (2005-2008) Hojjat ol-Islam Mustafa Pourmohammadi has reportedly begun exploring a run for the presidency. Pourmohammadi currently heads the State Inspectorate Office (SIO). According to an Iranian businessman just returning from a visit to Iran, the "real power" behind Pourmohammadi is IRGC Brigadier General Mohammad Zolghadr, who is also the current head of the Basij and the "political brain of the IRGC." Zolghadr was Pourmohammadi's deputy at the Ministry of Interior. If Pourmohammadi runs, said this businessman, hardliners will likely shift their support to Pourmohammadi because of their hatred of AN. Our contact described Pourmohammadi as Hashemi Rafsanjani's "servant." Meanwhile, AN fired Zolghadr after Zolghadr told a convention of governors that the U.S. threat to Iranian security should be taken seriously. AN objected strongly and tried to cast the U.S. as too weakened to still pose a real danger to Iran. Pourmohammadi resigned after AN fired Zolghadr because firing his deputy was taken as a direct affront. Comment: Pourmohammadi and Zolghadr together represent a blending of intelligence and IRGC forces; a very formidable combination, not just electorally, but also in terms of their ability to maintain stability. If Rafsanjani makes his support available to Pourmohammadi, it will mean he has lent his considerable influence to powerful challengers to AN from the left (Mousavi), center (Khatami), and right (Pourmohammadi). It also means that AN will almost certainly lose a core constituency - the IRGC and Basij - to rivals far more well-regarded by both the leadership and the rank and file of these organizations.

¶6. [C] Rising Fears of Electoral Fraud in Advance of June 12 Presidential Election: An Iranian political analyst reported that Tehran political elites are increasingly concerned about the regime's ability to manipulate votes, given that both bodies responsible for administering and supervising the electoral process, the Interior Ministry and the Guardian Council, are currently controlled by hardliners. He noted that presidential elections in 2001 and 2005 were run by an Interior Ministry that was in the hands of reformists; during this period, voter manipulation was generally confined to the final stages of the vetting process overseen by the Guardian Council. In the upcoming election, however, both institutions will be dominated by conservatives, leading to fears that not only will the Guardian Council severely limit the candidates able to run for president, but that the Ministry of Interior will permit (or possibly engineer) large-scale fraud if deemed necessary. Comment: These concerns about the potential for electoral fraud track with the reformist idea to call for UN observers, as discussed in last week's WOI (01/20/09).

¶7. [S/NF] Shirin Ebadi Departs Iran for Trip to the U.S.: According to a founding member of the One Million Signatures Campaign and close associate of Shirin Ebadi, the Nobel laureate left Tehran January 25 for Paris, where she will spend three days before continuing on to the United States. The source also said that in "the next few days" a group of Ebadi's supporters will publish a new website with more details of the January 1 mob attack on her office, including photos of the vandalized wall that was spray painted with "Shirin Ebadi = America." According to the activist, the intended message of the IRIG-orchestrated harassment is clear: challenges to the order are unacceptable and no one in Iran is untouchable.

¶8. [C] Getting Liquor Is Easier than Getting Credit: Iranian contacts have told us consistently that liquor, banned movies, and other contraband are easily obtainable in Iran. One Iranian-American businessman who travels frequently to Iran told us that he has never had trouble getting alcohol delivered to his door with just a phone call, with deliveries usually made by a family with young children to throw off suspicion. Iranians are finding that international credit is not so accessible, he told us. Our contact said that Iranian businessmen seeking letters of credit to import British goods were unable to obtain letters of credit from British banks because of sanctions. With no where else to turn, they were reportedly paying a 30 percent fee to brokers in Dubai to arrange credit for Western imports. Comment: These increased costs were being passed on to consumers to the extent possible, but the lack of accessible credit is making it harder and harder for private businesses to stay afloat, while those with governmental connections continue to finance their operations with government loans.

¶9. (U) Window on Iran is a classified, weekly product providing Washington policy community and Iran watcher highlights of key developments on Iran. It is produced by the Iran Regional Presence Office - Dubai. Please direct any questions/comments to: Kay McGowan XXXXXXXXXXXX or Charlie Pennypacker

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